

"IN MODERATION PLACING ALL MY GLORY, WHILE TORIES CALL ME WHIG—AND WHIGS A TORY.

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The "STONEY MORNING HERALD" is Published every Morning (Sundays excepted) on the Quarters and the 1st March, 30th June, 30th September, and 31st December; at which periods only can Subscribers decline by giving Notice and paying the amount due to the end of the Current Quarter. ADVERTISEMENTS must specify on the face of them the number of times they are intended to be inserted, or they will be continued till countermanded, and charged to the party. No Advertisements can be withdrawn after Eleven o'clock, a.m., but new ones will be received until Nine o'clock in the Evening. No verbal communications can be attended to, and all letters must be post paid, or they will not be taken in.

The property of an insolvent estate,
order of the trustee.
Terms at sale.

NATIONAL SOCIETY'S QUEEN'S LETTER

The following papers have just been issued:—

January Palace, Nov. 10, 1843.
Reverend Sir,—In obedience to the commands of Her Majesty, I require you to read from the desk in your church or chapel, the Queen's Letter, (a copy of which I have caused to be transmitted to you), on the Sunday next after the receipt thereof, or on such following Sunday before the 1st day of June next as you may judge most favourable to the purpose, immediately after morning or evening prayers.

You are also desired to cause the Queen's Letter to be read in every place of worship belonging to the Established Church in your parish (if there be any besides the parish church), and to communicate this letter to the minister or ministers thereof.

The great advantage derived to the children of the poor, and through them to the country at large, from the operations of the Society thus recommended, has been fully shown by experience; the exigencies of the present time demand redoubled exertion; and as the ability of this institution to prosecute its useful designs must depend on the means which may be at its disposal, I trust that on this occasion you will earnestly exhort your parishioners to liberality by a disbursement from the pulpit, and will also assist the parish officers in making collections at the dwellings of the several inhabitants.

Relying upon your zealous exertions in so good a cause, and praying God to prosper in your hands this pious and charitable work.

I remain your affectionate brother,

W. CANTUAR.

VICTORIA R.
Most Rev. Father in God, our right trust and right entirely beloved councillor, we greet you well.—Whereas the incorporated National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church throughout England and Wales have, by their petition, humbly represented unto us, that the president and governors of the society have now during a period of thirty-two years zealously and perseveringly laboured to carry into effect the great work for which they were incorporated, and have expended, either in the extension or improvement of popular education, the whole of the resources entrusted their disposal; either by the munificence of the Sovereign or the liberality of the public.

That the produce of the collections made under authority of the Royal letters which have for some time past been friendly granted on their petition has been exclusively expended in promoting the education of school-rooms permanently secured for the education of the children of the poor, while the other resources of the society have been chiefly appropriated to maintain its model schools and training institutions.

That the general principles upon which the Society has conducted its operations have now received the sanction of the Legislature as well as the approbation of our subjects at large.

That the plan upon which the Society has always acted of promoting local contributions, by granting moderate sums of money to aid in the erection of school-rooms, has been adopted by our Government in distributing the grants voted by Parliament in furtherance of national education; and that, with respect to the approval and co-operation of the people in general, it will be sufficient to observe, that the number of children attending schools immediately connected and corresponding with the Society amounted in 1813 to 40,454; in 1837, when the last return was made, to 527,911; and is now estimated at 700,000, the whole number of children in attendance at church schools being considerably above a million.

That the Parliamentary grants before adverted to, so far from superseding or even lessening the necessity for a renewed appeal on the part of the Society to the liberality of the nation, have, on the contrary, augmented to a great extent the demands for assistance from its funds; that applications for grants of money towards enabling parties to fulfil the conditions required by the Committee of Council on Education have gradually increased; and that the Parliamentary bounty could not continue to produce the same benefits which it has hitherto done, unless an institution such as the National Society existed, with the power of securing the most destitute places, and thereby qualifying them to claim the encouragement offered by the Legislature for the building of new school-rooms.

That the great progress which has been made in extending education among the poor renders more than ever the adoption of effective measures for its improvement; that for this purpose the Society must continue to maintain its Central Schools for boys, for girls, and for infants, will contribute towards the support of public and private establishments for instructing and training young persons of either sex, as well as adults, to be teachers; and give aid towards the expense of originating, and, if necessary, improving schools, so that the most improved methods of teaching may be speedily and effectually spread throughout the country.

That the model schools and training establishments of the Society will be maintained out of its ordinary resources; but that to provide the larger funds required for building schools, and carrying on the other operations above adverted to, great additional resources are indispensable.

THE CORN-LAW QUESTION

The Corn-law question seems now, by universal consent, to be narrowed into one between a low fixed duty and total repeal. No man in his senses, we imagine, any longer doubts that a fixed duty of about five or six shillings a quarter is the highest amount of protection that the most sanguine agriculturist can look forward to as the result of the next legislative move on the subject. Even the *Times* tells its friends in unceremonious language that the days of the sliding-scale are numbered, and that the adoption of a low fixed duty has become a matter of necessity. Indeed, it goes further, and throws overboard altogether the idea of agricultural protection, taking its stand in support of a fixed duty, solely on the ground of revenue. We believe this is a pretty accurate representation of the state of public opinion on the subject. Monopoly is fairly beaten from its original position, that of protection and compulsion, and falls back as a last resource upon the low position of a fixed duty for the sake of revenue. Is this position more tenable than the former? We believe not, for the following reasons.

If the idea of protection be once abandoned, and a duty on corn be advocated solely as a means of raising revenue, the question instantly arises—Is this a good means of raising revenue? Is it a customs duty on the importation of the first necessities of life consistent with the sound principles of political economy and of taxation? The answer must be decidedly in the negative for two reasons: first, a tax on the absolute necessities of life, like a tax on raw materials, always objectionable. Bread is, in fact, a raw material of industry, and a tax upon bread is, like a tax upon salt, timber, iron, wool, cotton or flax, only to be defended on grounds of absolute necessity. But secondly, if it be admitted that a tax upon bread is indispensable for purposes of revenue, it follows indisputably that it should be levied in the way which will bring the largest sum into the Exchequer with the least expense to the consumer. Now, a Customs duty of ten shillings a quarter on an importation of 2,000,000 quarters would only give the same revenue as an Excise duty of one shilling on a total consumption of 20,000,000 quarters. The annual consumption of the country is estimated roughly at about 20,000,000 quarters of wheat and 40,000,000 quarters of other grain of every description. An Excise duty of one shilling per quarter on wheat, and sixpence on inferior grain, would therefore give a larger revenue than an average Customs duty of eight shillings a quarter on the total importation of grain that could possibly be expected. And yet the effect of the Customs duty would be to raise the price to the consumer five or six shillings a quarter, or the whole consumption as compared to the price under the Excise duty: in other words to take some £12,000,000 or £15,000,000 annually indirectly from the pockets of the people in order to put £2,000,000 or £2,000,000 directly into the Exchequer. A Customs duty is only a legitimate revenue duty where the article imported is not produced at home, or if produced, is subjected to an equivalent Excise duty; otherwise it is, as in the case of the Customs duty on foreign grain in reality a gratification and not a revenue duty.

But the main objection to a tax on corn stands on a higher ground of moral principle. Doubtless, a tax on the necessities of life, a tax which falls principally on the great masses of unprotected and unrepresented labouring population, is the most convenient and the most productive; but it is right, is it fair, is it on higher considerations than the mere passing expediency of the moment, a statesmanlike mode of raising revenue? If it be not the salt tax re-imposed? Why is the *gabellé* of the old French regime universally condemned as an odious and immoral imposition? If we are to have a corn-law for the purposes of revenue, let it be called at least by its proper name; let it be known that England in the nineteenth century does not fit by its legislative wisdom in Parliament assembled, to impose a *gabellé* on bread.

The fact is, that the great objection to our present fiscal system is, that it already imposes a disproportionate burden of taxation on the poorer classes. There is no country in Europe in which property, and especially landed property, is taxed so lightly as in England; and no country where such exorbitant imposts are levied on the comforts, luxuries, and necessary articles of consumption of the labouring man. The necessities of the labouring man are—bread, beef, bacon, butter, cheese, soap, candles, and in the present

state of civilization, we may almost say tea, coffee, and sugar. His principal luxuries are small liquors, tobacco, and wine. Now, how are the prices of these articles of consumption affected by taxation? A sliding-scale is imposed on the importation of foreign corn with the avowed intention of raising its price more, and protecting the landed interest; better, than would be done by a fixed revenue duty of ten shillings a quarter, or 20 per cent. On the ordinary consumption of wheat alone this is equivalent to a tax of £10,000,000 annually levied on the labouring classes. Animal food was, until lately, prohibited, and even now bacon is subjected to an import duty of 13d. per lb., and beef to a duty of 1d. per lb.; or in each case, fully 20 per cent. *ad valorem*. Cheese pays sixteen shillings and sixpence per cwt., and butter twenty shillings, the sums received by the revenue upon these two articles being respectively £134,000 and £262,000 annually. The duty on tea is considerably more than 100 per cent. on the value of the cheaper qualities consumed principally by the poorer classes; and a revenue of about £4,000,000 is raised upon this article alone. The duty on coffee, even after the reduction made by the late tariff, is 109 per cent. in the value of the plain cheap sorts, and gives a revenue of £500,000. The market value of sugar is about twenty-three shillings per cwt., or, in other words, halfpenny per lb. The duty is twenty-five shillings and fourpence on colonial sugar, with a surcharge of protection by the exclusion of foreign sugar, which makes the lowest price to the consumer sevenpence or eightpence per lb., or three times the natural price. The amount of taxation levied on sugar for purposes of revenue is about £5,000,000 annually, and the colonial protection is equivalent to another tax of about the same amount. Tobacco is taxed 400 per cent. on its value, and produces £3,500,000. Upwards of £5,000,000 annually is raised on malt; £800,000 on hop; £200,000 on tallow; £450,000 on bricks and tiles, and so on upon all principal articles that enter into the weekly budget of expenditure of the working man, or into the elements of cost of his dwelling and daily necessities.

On the other hand, the real property of the country, amounting to an annual income of £62,000,000, pays only about £6,000,000 towards rates and local taxation, and becomes almost a tax-free and assessed tax of £4,000,000 towards general taxation. In France, real property pays in taxation about £15,000,000 a year. In Prussia, Austria, and all the countries of Germany, at least a third of the whole revenue of the state is raised by direct taxation on real property. On the whole, real property on the Continent is taxed on the average at least 30 per cent., while in England it does not pay, between local and general taxation, above 12 or 14 per cent., that is to say, about half the minimum taxation paid by the labouring man on the first necessities of life, and about an eighth or tenth of the rate paid by him upon the comforts which usage and the habits of society have rendered almost as indispensable as his daily bread.

In this state of things we confess that the idea of a *gabellé* on bread, for the purpose of revenue, appears to us altogether out of the question. The requisitions of natural justice and sound policy are all the other way, and instead of imposing a duty on corn, for the benefit of the landed interest, the nation is much more in the humour to impose a tax of some two or three shillings on the pound on income derived from real property, in order to enable it to carry out some of the great fiscal reforms which are required to complete the emancipation of industry, and to alleviate the burdens which press with undue weight upon the labouring classes.

THE WAIRAU MASSACRE

(From the *Times* December 10th.)
It is not surprising that the late disaster in New Zealand should have excited strong and conflicting sentiments in the minds of people in this country. The nature of the quarrel—the immediate results—the suddenness of the combat—the great loss of life—the elements, storm, and premature fall of the English gentlemen who fell—least of all the probable effects of the calamity upon the fortunes of the colony—have all conspired to stamp the event with a character of the deepest interest. Where there has been quarrel and bloodshed, there has been a tragedy; and where the mingled cowardice and ruthlessness of a few have already provoked the prudent and honourable courage of their brave and temperate companions, who can assure himself that many and brave men may not be hereafter doomed to share the same grave as their countrymen? Thus men will reason, and to many in English homes the returning Christmas will bring only regret for those that are gone; and anxious fears for those who survive.

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